



Shallow Lake Shoreland Protection: Wild Rice Lakes



Outdoor Heritage Funds: \$1,891,000

Grant	\$1,891,000
Leveraged Funds*	\$20,000
Total Budget	\$1,911,000

* Leveraged Funds include required 25% local match

Project Sponsor:

Minnesota Board of Water & Soil Resources (BWSR)

Project Partners:

Ducks Unlimited, Minnesota
Department of Natural Resources,
Minnesota Soil & Water Conservation
Districts

Grant Period:

2012

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Project Narrative

This initiative addresses development pressures along ecologically sensitive shorelines in 8 north central Minnesota counties by providing private shallow lakeshore landowners with expanded protection options. In partnership with Ducks Unlimited, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and local soil and water conservation districts, this program will protect 700 acres of shallow wild rice lakeshore habitat through permanent conservation easements (BWSR and Ducks Unlimited) and fee-title acquisition (Minnesota Department of Natural Resources).

This new initiative includes existing permanent shore-land conservation easement programs and—where needed and on a more limited basis—fee-title acquisition. The program emphasizes the protection of shallow, wild rice lakes in the Northern Forest Section by acquiring permanent easements or fee-title on 700 acres along key shallow wild rice lakes to insure the long-term sustainability of Minnesota's unique wild rice habitat resource.

Ducks Unlimited and BWSR will work closely to coordinate the development and promotion of new easement options to private landowners. In addition, they will negotiate the purchase of permanent conservation easements from willing sellers to protect 550 acres from future subdivision, development, and shoreline alteration. Tracts to be targeted for conservation easements will be selected based on the degree they help permanently protect all the land around a given wild rice lake, threat of development, or other conservation objectives. Finally, in cases where land is for sale and conservation easements are not an option to protect Shoreland or where a tract is a public land in-holding or adjacent to extensive public land and is a desirable addition to public land holdings, the MNDNR will secure approximately 150 acres via fee-title acquisition from willing sellers for future state ownership.

This program fills a niche that targets funding for shore-land protection specifically on shallow lakes, unlike most other conservation easement programs.

Proposed Measurable Outcomes

Protect 700 acres of shallow wild rice lakeshore habitat through permanent conservation easements and fee-title acquisition.

Actual Measurable Outcomes

The project started implementation in 2011.

Evaluation and Outcome Plans

Accomplishment plans required by Lessard Sams Outdoor Heritage Fund identify the number of acres of permanent protection, restored wetlands and adjacent wildlife habitat. These RIM easements are a part of a comprehensive public-private partnership for habitat restoration, improved water quality and resource protection. These plans must include a long term stewardship plan and identify sources and amounts of funding. The long-term evaluation of easements will be monitored as part of the state's intensive watershed monitoring strategy. RIM easements are subject to ongoing inspection to ensure compliance for the duration of the easement in accordance with established guidelines.

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